

H. Mearns 579

A

LETTER

TO THE

MASTERS, WARDENS, and BRETHREN,

OF

TRINITY GUILD;

ON

Their late RECONCILIATION,

AND THE

Approaching ELECTION.



Printed in the Year 1749.

Sep 27

LETTER

TO THE

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MASTERS, WARDENS, AND BRETHREN

I
Wrote you a letter of the 12th of June a twelvemonth ago
on your late Dispute to which in
a language which ought to be familiar to you
TRINITY GUILD



their late Reconciliation

Other Party which is now your
To the London AND THE

your late Dispute and now there is appointed
have declared myself an Advocate for that Party who
Approaching Election

have opposed him down in London and Paris
right on which I have written a few lines
they may possibly be used as well as I expect

to some wavering between of Mr. G. I have
go over to the other side
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I have written a few lines

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and that I have written a few lines
everyone or printed in the Year 1790, and I
writing

LETTER, &c.

Gentlemen,

I Wrote you a Letter about a twelvemonth ago on your late Disputes at *Guild-ball*, to which, in a Language which ought to be familiar to you, I beg leave to be referred.

Nothing has since happened to make either Party, among you, alter his Opinion concerning the Merits of this Dispute; you have made Peace out of mere weariness of Contention; and, at great Expence and Trouble, have just learned this; that it is the Majority amongst you, who are the properest Judges of the behaviour of your Brethren—of the Pretensions of either Party arisen amongst you.

To the Judgment of this Majority the Merits of your late Disputes must now shortly be submitted. I have declared myself an Advocate for that Party who supported the Election of *Mr. Read*, and as such I have called, and do now again call, upon those, who have opposed him, to lay down the Reason and Principles on which they act: If they do not convince, they may possibly puzzle; and give, at least, a Pretext, to some wavering Brethren of *Mr. Read's* Party, to go over to the other Side.

I have, I think, fully explained on what Principle I Act and Write. I mean to serve every individual of the Corporation, to make every one of my Brethren, as considerable as the Nature of Government and Order will admit; and to give each and every one of them an Opportunity of offering, and supporting

porting his Opinion, in any thing which may affect the well being of the whole Corporation—or rather of Trade and Commerce, on which not only this particular Body, but the City, but the Kingdom has its dependance and security. I apprehend that your Guild is, and must be, of great weight, whilst your Representations, and Addresses are supposed to be the Representations, and Addresses of the whole Body: But that they will, and can have no weight, if they be suspected to be the Works and Sentiments of a few Arbitrary Rulers; or of an illegal and usurping Faction.

It was not, therefore, from any particular Regard, or Friendship that I voted last Year for Mr. *Read*, Mr. *Harrison*, Mr. *Sweeny*, or Mr. *Wrightson*; and as much as I could supported their Election. It was out of regard to all my Brethren; even to the very Men I opposed; these I apprehended were voting for, and supporting (they knew not what,) the Authority of a Council; from whom, if they did not expect any Advantage for themselves, they could expect nothing for the Public.

I was, I thought, serving those, who, from a Superstitious awe to supposed By-Laws or Customs, were precipitating themselves into Dependance,—who were depriving themselves of the Just Weight they ought to retain among their Brethren,—of the Opportunity of consulting and forwarding the good of their Corporation and of Trade.

I regret, neither the Time or Money, it may have cost me. I have by it kept my Station. And we are now in no worse a Condition than when the Dispute began. Had we voided the Election made by the Corporation, and submitted to that made by the Council; the Corporation would have been, in my Opinion, as it were dissolved. At least, I am sure, every Man who loved Liberty, or, in other Words, every Brother who looks on an Incorporation as something valuable, the Freedom of it as an Honour, as a Distinction,

Distinction, would have desired disfranchisement. To share, in Power and Franchises, is Liberty and Honour; but to depend on, and submit to Equals is Dependence and Disgrace.

Monday next is your Election Day, the *Monday* 8 Days after your Quarter-Day; such as will be your Resolves on those Days, such will be the Honour, or such will be the Disgrace of being a Brother of your Corporation.

By the Treaty lately concluded between the contending Parties it is agreed——

That the Election, for Masters and Wardens, shall be proceeded on, in the same manner, this Year, that it has been for some Years past, that is,

That the Council, such as it is, shall return to the Master Eight Warden-Peers, out of which the Master shall return 4 to the Common-Hall, from which the Junior Master shall be chose.

That, in like Manner, the Council shall return 8 Brethren to the Master, out of which the Master is to return 4 to the Hall, from which the two Wardens for next Year are to be chosen.

These Terms are hard; because, it is more than probable, not one Man of Mr. *Read's* Party will be returned to him by the present Council; composed, as they are, of all the Aldermen, Sheriff Peers, old Masters and Wardens, and 31 Persons, in whose Nomination, Master *Read* had not the greatest Share.

It is therefore to be presumed, that we shall have next Year, Masters and Wardens, who will be disagreeable to the Majority of the Corporation; for such I take Mr. *Read's* Party to be,

If, therefore, an Opposition can ever, be justly given, to any Magistrates, it must be when, they thus hold a Power contrary to the sense, and Opinion of the Majority. I would not however advise that any such opposition should be given; on the contrary; I would have you submit to them in all things Legal; remembering always that their Authority is but temporary; and

and that whilst they hold it, you can put them to this Alternative, either of shewing themselves Tyrants, in their Sphere, by refusing to put such Questions as will be proposed and seconded, or by keeping Order in your Assembly, by acting with impartiality and Justice, in the Administration committed to their Hands, of shewing, in contradiction to those who returned them, that they would have been worthy to be your Masters by a fair Election.

Thus far you may not fear the Recovery of your Liberties, even under their Administration. If the Majority of you be actuated by the Sense of Liberty, you will now secure it—and that you cannot do unless you get Laws to this or the like purposes.

“ To confine the Power of the Council of the House, to a bare Recommendation of what you are to do, whether in Matter of Election or ordinary Business.

“ To make that Council free by excluding from it all Aldermen and Sheriff Peers.” These ought to have no Jurisdiction in Corporations, whilst, as Aldermen, and Common Council Men, they have an Authority, and Controul in another Place, independant of you.

“ To make the Place of every one of your Council truly honourable.” Such it cannot be, unless it be conferred by the free and unbiaised Voices of a Majority of Freemen.

If you think that a Representation in the Common-Council of the City is of any Value to you, take Care of this also. Let none be your Representatives but such as are really Merchants, or Traders; Men who know your Interests.—Men who have them at Heart. How many such have you at present at the Board of Aldermen? few Peers? or Council of your House? and whence can the want of them proceed? From nothing, my worthy Brethren, but your want of Encouragement. Or rather because the Majority amongst you have not in their Power to prefer those who they think the most deserving. It proceeds

proceeds from your want of Weight, Authority, Power, and Liberty.

It is neither my Interest nor my Intention to give Offence; and can I give any when I make a Distinction? and advise you also to make one, in all your Elections, between those who are really Traders, and those who are not? Is it an Affront to a Woollen Draper? to a Seller of Toys? to an Apothecary? to a Druggist? to a Grocer? to an Ironmonger? to a Wine Merchant? to a Banker? to say he comes not within the Predicament of a Trader. Or will it be imputed to me as a Piece of Arrogance to say I am not one of those? Would my worthy Friend Mr. Warden *Sweeney* be offended if I exclude him from being a Trader, in the proper and strict Sense of the Word? Are not the Characters of an eminent Grocer, a considerable Citizen, a Man of Eminence and Worth amongst his Brethren, Appellations of Honour as great as if I should improperly call him a Merchant, without any other Addition? The latter, the Traders, are not. I will say, of the most considerable Body amongst you; but certain it is, they are those who by being unconfined in their Business, I say, can, or ought, most reasonably to be supposed to understand best the general Interests of Trade. One who follows a particular Branch of it, can properly understand but that; but a Merchant embraces the whole. It is on particular Trades and Professions that his is founded; and his Success, or Misfortunes depend on the Success, or Failure of those whom he supplies, or by whom he is supplied, with the Object of his Trade, Imports and Exports.

I would not exclude from your Councils, and Offices those who are not, in this Sense, Merchants. On the contrary, these are not properly the Proprietors of your Grants, they are those amongst you, who reap the least Benefit and Advantage from them. They may follow their Calling without admittance into your Franchises.

Franchises—but still they are your Brethren in every Sense—your Interests are one and the same, and if Grocers, Druggists, &c. are to be represented, so ought those whose Business is confined to no particular Trade—And are they, I will not say, preferred, but, on an equality with you? and in the usual way, have they an equal share of Distinction, and Power among you?

To make your Elections of Council and Representatives free, I would advise they were determined by Ballot. What Difficulty is there in printing the Names of all your Brethren Alphabetically? and that every Brother should be furnished with such a List at a proper Time before your Elections? and should deliver in the Names of those Persons whom he thought most fit to advise in the Council of your House, or to represent you in the Common Council of the City? such is already the Method in the Corporation of Goldsmiths. Until this or something like it be done, you will have properly no Council nor Representatives: For at present the former is not yours, but the Masters and Wardens by whom they have been appointed, and your Commons represent none other but their Electors, your Master, his Council, or the Board of Aldermen; and to their honour it may be said, they have generally acted like faithful Representatives,—with a due Regard, Submission and Obedience to their Constituents.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most Obedient Servant,

I would not exclude from your
September 27. 1749. and Affectionate Brethren,
A MERCHANT.
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Franchises

